

'68 Delegates Served FBI As Informants

By Jeff Prugh
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JACKSON, Miss.—Three members of Mississippi's delegation to the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago acted as informants who kept watch on fellow state delegates for an FBI counterintelligence program aimed at disrupting the "New Left," according to an FBI teletype message that has now been made public.

It is believed to be the first documentation that the FBI infiltrated either of America's two major political parties.

The bureau's decodified internal memo dated Sept. 5, 1968, reported that three "delegates or alternate delegates" were convention informants. A copy of the teletyped document was obtained by the Los Angeles Times from the Mississippi Surveillance Project, a nonprofit lobby for individual privacy rights sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee.

The memo does not identify the informants. One delegate, Kenneth Dean, who was then director of the Mississippi Council on Human Relations, said Saturday that he had agreed to report convention activities to the FBI under the code name "Mr. Magnolia" after having been told by an FBI agent here of an alleged death threat against the late Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minn.) the party's presidential nominee.

However, Dean, who is now a Baptist minister in Memphis, insisted that he was not an informant and that he had turned down an alleged FBI offer of \$100 and payment of travel expenses to Chicago before he left for the convention. He said he learned that the alleged threat against Humphrey was not serious.

"What the FBI did with me was not improper," said Dean, adding that he had cooperated with the FBI in investigating murders of civil rights workers in Mississippi. "Remember, Robert

Kennedy had just been killed. And we'd heard that the Chicago police said they would beat the hell out of people who had long hair. The offer to pay my expenses was a little offensive to me, but please don't say I was an informant."

The chairman of the racially mixed, 45-member Loyal Democrats of Mississippi group, which unseated the state's regular delegation in a stormy convention floor fight, was Aaron Henry, president of the Mississippi chapter of the NAACP.

Henry, who was attending a Mississippi Democratic Party meeting here Saturday, said he was "not particularly disturbed" by the report and that he did not know which delegates were informants. "We always lived with the understanding we were under public scrutiny—my telephone was tapped and my mail was always delayed one day," Henry said.

In Washington, an FBI spokesman said that the bureau would not comment on the memo. Roy K. Moore, who was FBI agent-in-charge of the Jackson field office in 1968 and is now an executive with a Jackson bank, could not be reached for comment.

The memo was part of the bureau's then-secret Cointelpro operation, which began in the 1960s and was directed against leftist groups such as the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers' Party and "black extremists" groups, but also against right-wing groups such as the Ku Klux Klan.